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Subject: RT: CTV News Channel: Minister Blair, Minister Mendicino, Minister LeBlanc, Minister Alghabra, Treasury Board President Mona Fortier, and MP Yasir Naqvi hold a press conference on the blockades in Ottawa. 1:00ET 2022-02-07

Rough Transcript

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Summary: Minister Blair, Minister Mendicino, Minister LeBlanc, Minister Alghabra, Treasury Board President Mona Fortier, and MP Yasir Naqvi hold a press conference on the blockades in Ottawa.

Moderator: [...] They will be providing an update regarding the situation in Ottawa right now. Just a reminder for questions, please raise your hand. We will start with -- please raise your hand on zoom, rather. I'm told we have 20 minutes of questions after the remarks. So I'll hand over the floor to the ministers and then we'll proceed to questions. Merci beaucoup.

Minister of Emergency Preparedness Bill Blair: Well, thank you very much for that kind introduction. [Speaking French] Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us. Before we begin, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge that I am speaking to you today from the traditional territory of the Mississauga of the credit. The events that have taken place in Ottawa over the past 10 days have had a significant and frankly unacceptable impact on the lives and the freedom of people who live here, who conduct business here and among all Canadians coming to do business in their nation's capital. And since the outset, we have encouraged those who are engaged in this process to obey the law and respect the rights of their fellow citizens. To the people of Ottawa and on behalf of our government, let me first say that we share in your frustration and deeply regret that the actions of these protesters continue to inflict such disruption in your neighborhoods. The RCMP, the parliamentary protective services and other federal partners have remained in close contact with the Ottawa police service and we continue to play a significant coordination role between these agencies. But let me be clear. It is not the role of any government to direct law enforcement operations. It is the responsibility of the place of jurisdiction, and in this case the Ottawa police service to maintain public order and to uphold the rule of law. They must have the appropriate resources and they do have the appropriate tools that they require to keep their community safe. And in circumstances where events exceed the capacity of the police service to respond as they are required to do, there are well-established authorities for the police to seek assistance. And as the federal government, we are here to provide support to local police and have responded affirmatively to every request that we've received. There has been ongoing work to ensure that we're mobilizing all resources to provide every support that is required. Yesterday the city of Ottawa declared a state of emergency. In response to this, the federal government is proposing to convene a trilateral table with municipal and provincial partners. I reached out today to the solicitor general for province of Ontario and to the mayor of Ottawa, to convene a table that I believe that will allow us to keep lines of communication open during what is a fluid and dynamic situation and to respond with speed and efficiency to meet the city's needs. This is building upon the active and ongoing conversation, collaboration and coordination that has taken place on every political level between our respective officials and allow us to keep these lines of communication open. There's been open and active engagement from our senior public officials to senior public officials and the city of Ottawa to provide support and there is close collaboration between the provincial services and police services and the RCMP. I would like to take the opportunity to address those individuals who are still participating in this event. Many of the actions that have taken place over the course of this demonstration have been unlawful. And, frankly, disrespectful to the rights and freedoms of all Canadians. It is well past the time to bring this protest to an end. Canada is a peaceful nation and we serve as an example of hope to countries around the world and we look after our neighbors and treat each other with respect in this country. We do not intimidate or threaten fellow citizens, we don't desecrate the national war memorial or desecrate statues of heroes or bring symbols of hate and discrimination. The freedom to

engage in lawful, peaceful assembly and process is a fundamental charter right. However, when an events no longer peaceful, when the event is disrupting the lives and jeopardizing the livelihoods of fellow Canadians, business owners have been forced to close out of concern over safety for their staff and families with young children haven't been able to sleep due to the constant honking of horns and this, frankly, needs to end. The last two years have been incredibly difficult for every single Canadian. The pandemic has impacted the mental health of Canadians in every part of the country. We missed holidays and celebrations with family and with friends. We've had to say good-bye to far too many loved ones over video calls and people have felt alone, isolated and scared. We all want this pandemic to be over. We have all made sacrifices and we want to return to normal as quickly as possible and we will get there. But the way forward is not by infringing upon the freedom and rights of your fellow Canadians. It's why getting vaccinated, doing your part to protect yourself and your community. I want to assure the people of Ottawa we'll don't support the city of Ottawa and Ottawa police service in their work as police of jurisdiction. And I would like to extend my gratitude as well to all the police services that are assisting in this effort. Thank you all very much and I invite minister Mendicino to say a few words.

Minister of Public Safety Marco Mendicino: Thank you, Bill. I would like to recognize that I'm coming to you from the indigenous territories of the Algonquin people. A number of demonstrations took place across the country. Some were carried out peacefully and in accordance with the law and this is thanks to local law enforcement as well as residents and businesses who showed patience, understanding and. Respect for the rule of law during those protests. The people of Ottawa, however, have had to endure significant disruption to their daily lives as a result of the convoy here. There had been numerous instances of intimidation, harassment, violence and hate. Many residents have been effectively held hostage in their own city. Blockaded by an angry, loud, intolerant and violent crowd. While everyone believes in the right to free speech, this convoy has crossed the line of acceptable conduct towards fellow Canadians, many, many times. Now there has been some progress over the last 12 hours and there needs to be more progress and more quickly. I want to commend Ottawa police services for stepping up enforcement. Over 500 tickets laid, charges laid. Criminal investigations ongoing. Structures are coming down. And this is being done safely and respectfully. In the weeks that follow, we will need to be really clear that we can't find ourselves in a similar situation again. We're also very concerned about the ongoing situation at the Coutts border crossing in Alberta. Where a group of blockaders continues to impede access with important linkages to the United States. We are grateful to the work of the CBS, the RCMP and other officials to ensure that those lines of supply continue to flow. I want to be clear that there should be no differences across political parties in the way that we are dealing with this moment. It would be a terrible precedent to say that if you show up to the nation's capital with heavy equipment and blockade the capital city, that you can force reckless change in our public policy. It has been surprising that some who say they believe in law and order seem not get this point. [Speaking French] [Voice of interpreter] For the moment, this is what we can do to support the Ottawa police, which is responsible for applying local laws. Since the start, the federal government has been there to support the S.P.L. Throughout the evolution of the situation. The RCMP has approved requests for additional support. Following a call that I had with mayor Watson last week, I was able to confirm that the RCMP had received and approved an additional funding request. Following another request this weekend, more agents have been made available. Since Saturday, over 275 RCMP agents have been made available to help Ottawa police and work under their command. The RCMP is in talks with Ottawa police and O.P.P. And will adapt its support in accordance with the situation as it evolves. I am asking for operational updates throughout day and daily updates and I want to make sure that me and my partners can help restore the rule of law. I'm working with my provincial and municipal counterparts and I have spoken also with minister Jones, premier Kenney and ministers from Alberta and the mayor of Ottawa, Mr. Watson. [Speaking English] The covid-19 pandemic is approaching its second anniversary in Canada. We all want to see a return to normal life. And a responsible evidence-based easing of the guidelines and protocols. And I assure you that day is coming spoken. -- Coming soon. Canadians have been incredibly united and have persevered through it all. The approach our government offered is about using science and good-faith efforts to protect ourselves and one another. Because people have chosen this path. Thousands of lives have been saved. And we cannot allow an angry crowd to reverse the course that continues to save lives in this last stretch. This should never be a precedent for how to make policy in Canada. We believe in peace, order, and good government in Canada. The stories from community across the country of people sticking together looking after one another and giving back have somehow made this year a little bit easier. But we can't give up on each other now. More than ever, we need to support one another, to work side by side. Regardless of level of government or party stripe to take care of one another. Canadians deserve to feel safe in their communities and no one is above the law. Thank you. Merci.

Minister of Transport Omar Alhabra: Good afternoon. I want to start off by thanking Canadian truckers. They continue to deliver for Canadians during these challenging times. I continue to meet with truckers and various representatives and hear their input. [Speaking French] [voice of Interpreter] I'm continuing to speak with community organizations. I met with truckers in Mississauga and in Alberta. Last Monday, representatives of the trucking industry participated in the supply chain summit offering important feedback about how to address real challenges faced by the industry. This morning, I met with the Canadian trucking alliance where we had a constructive conversation about addressing the industry's needs and priorities. They all told me this occupation does not represent Canadian truckers. They also all said that, in Canada, this is not how we raise concerns and advocate for policies. These blockades and occupations need to end. Unlawful activities are not the way to offer meaningful involvement in government policy development. In addition to engaging the industry, I've also been working with my provincial counterparts. [Speaking French] On Saturday, I met with my Alberta counterpart where we exchanged ideas and I offered on behalf of the federal government our support. [Speaking English] I'm also looking forward to be speaking with minister Mulroney on how we can work together. The provinces have extensive regulatory powers over commercial trucking and road transportation to help end this unlawful occupation and disruptions of commercial trucks blockading the streets and highways. These powers could include, for example, quickly enforcing the provisions. Ontario highway safety to begin suspending commercial licenses and also insurance of commercial owners of the equipment blockading the streets. Days on end. In a city or on a highway. It's clear blockades of streets and bridges is against the law and should bring serious consequences for the owners. I would also encourage the province of Ontario to draw on lessons learned from other provinces on how to use their road safety authority to contain unlawful activities by commercial trucks. We saw Quebec successfully do this last weekend with roadside safety inspections of trucking -- of trucks traveling to blockades. I want to assure Canadians that we hold our secret responsibilities to protect their health and safety and we'll continue to be guided by the best advice to manage the pandemic. And as the situation evolves, we will adjust our posture as I am sure provincial and territorial governments will. We are all tired of covid-19. But we must remain vigilant and take advice from our doctors and public health experts. [Speaking French] We must remain vigilant. And now I'd like to pass the mic to my friend, Dominic LeBlanc.

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities Dominic LeBlanc: [Speaking French] Thank you very much, Omar. The ongoing events in Ottawa have deeply shocked Canadians. Since the beginning of this crisis, our government has been working closely with our provincial and municipal partners in order to determine their needs and to see how the federal government can provide support. I am and will continue to be, along with my cabinet colleagues in exact mayors and premiers from across country. Our government is confident that the city of Ottawa and the province of Ontario have the tools and the jurisdiction to best respond to this crisis. We will work with municipal partners to put an end to this unacceptable situation and, as always, stand ready as minister Blair said to provide any appropriate assistance available. [Speaking French]: And with that, I'd like to give the floor to my colleague, Mona Fortier.

President of Treasury Board Mona Fortier: Hello, and thank you for joining us. On behalf of organizations of Ottawa Grenier and Ottawa center and the entire national capital region, I say to you we have had enough. This situation must come to an end. Our residents, businesses are suffering. They have shown incredible resilience throughout this pandemic. Our essential services have stood strong through lockdowns and safety measures and have helped us keep residents safe. We are here to let you know that we stand with you and will continue to have your back. In the past days, I've had numerous conversations with mayor Watson and representatives of local B.I.A.S, business and community leaders. I have been engaged with concerned businesses, residences and organizations through countless phone call, e-mails and text messages. They have shared firsthand with me the disruptions to their livelihoods and well-being. [Speaking French] Our residents deserve to feel safe in their own communities. Right now, and for the past 10 days, the rights and freedoms of my community have been restricted and this must come to an end. I would like to thank my colleagues for their presence here today. And for their valuable cooperation since the start of this situation. I would like to thank my colleagues in the national capital region who are at the forefront of this immense pressure and difficulties associated with the convoy. The government will always support the GHT peaceful protest in Canada, but we will also, always condemn violence and threats. And from what we are witnessing on the ground and hearing from residents, this is the furthest thing from a peaceful protest. [Speaking French] Thank you, and I'd like to give the floor to my colleague from Ottawa center.

Liberal Part MP Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, minister. Good afternoon. No words can accurately describe the agony of what my community has gone through. For residents of downtown Ottawa, this continues to be a horrific experience. [Speaking French] This is a horrible experience. [Speaking English] From what my community has seen in the past 11 days, the protesters' actions has not been peaceful or lawful. Members of my community have been harassed because of their skin color. Yelled at for wearing masks. Subjected to hurtful and racist symbols, torturous honking and there are accounts of assaults. Parking lots have been used as urinals. Fireworks are being hurled down the streets every night. And over the weekend, there was an attempt to lighting on fire an apartment building. My heart goes out to the residences of downtown Ottawa who have demonstrated incredible resiliency, patience and strength. We welcome the enhanced enforcement and the mayor's decision to declare a state of emergency. It has to continue until all the residential streets of downtown Ottawa are free of illegally parked trucks and restored back to what they were before so people can live peacefully again. This has gone on too long. Residents are not able to sleep. Workers and businesses remain once again severely impacted. [Speaking French] Trep this has to stop. Our community deserves to live in peace. [Speaking English] I'm glad to see further collaboration between all levels of government. We must work together to put an end to this protest and protect our community. Thank you. Merci.

Moderator: Interpreter: Thank you. We will now move on to questions on zoom. I would like to remind you to raise your digital hands so you can take floor. Per usual, we will start first with members. And alternate between English and French. Just a reminder to raise your hand if you do have a question so I can unmute you on zoom and, as usual, we will be alternating between English and French questions and, ministers, if I could ask you, since we have limited time to keep your answers short, we'll be able to have as many questions as possible. On that note, I'll start with Mia Rapson from the Canadian press.

Reporter:: Caller: Yes. I'm curious if you can talk about the foreign funding that is alleged to have been behind much of this. The impact that has on Canada, what kind of investigations can be done and what the laws actually say or limit about those kinds of donations or funding.

Minister Mendicino: I'm happy to speak to that. The first thing that I would say is that obviously to the extent that there may be any ongoing investigation that is being carried out by law enforcement that those investigations will be conducted independent of the elected government. But I do want to take a moment to acknowledge the actions that go fund me has taken as you will recall, there was roughly \$10 million that was contributed to that platform. And as a result of some due diligence undertaken by go fund me, around the source of those distributions as well as what they might be used towards, they suspended the distribution of those funds to the convoy. There were flags that gave them cause for concern. I will say that in general terms, we need to be very vigilant about external forces, about foreign interference and that funds which are being collected are not used for inappropriate pearls, which may, indeed, undermine public safety. At the the end of the day, to the extent that there is evidence or information with regards to those activities, we know and appreciate that they will be investigated by our independent law enforcement partners.

Reporter:: Thank you. And I don't know who is left to answer this question, if it is minister Blair or minister Mendicino. There's been a lot of discussion here today about, this isn't how can -- Canada is a peaceful country and that the police have the tools to manage this. But at least for many people in Ottawa, there are a lot of people calling this a complete failure of policing. Even today as the police chief was talking about not allowing anymore gasoline to come into the red zone. There were pictures and videos being taken of people carrying those cancel right past police. So can you talk about the confidence that people should have in police, given what people have witnessed, and if you really do think that the police have the tools to bring in to an end?

Minister Mendicino: I'm happy to say a few words about that and then pass on to minister Blair as both he and I have extensive experience within the law enforcement context. But first and foremost, as I said in my remarks, I think there will be an opportunity for reflection on how law enforcement has been upheld and where there have been challenges and I want to echo the comments on the sympathy that we extend to Ottawa residents who have a right to feel safe when they leave their homes, to move about their daily live, to be able to get to work, to be ab to drop off their kids to daycare, to essentially be confident that the rule of law will be upheld. I know that the Ottawa police service has stepped up police enforcement activities and during my remarks they should be commend for that and we will certainly look forward to that moment when we'll see the conclusion of this convoy safely and responsibly and with the

cooperation of those who have par notice paid in it. I want to make the point and it is important for everyone to appreciate, that law enforcement does operate independently of the elected government. We're not a country that believes that policing should be carried out or be an extension of the political branch of the government. There are very good and principled reasons why the divisions of functions need to be maintained separately and clearly within a democracy.

Minister Blair: With respect to the investigations of or the actions of the police and I know and I spoke this morning myself to the minister responsible for policing in Ontario, solicitor general of Ontario. And she's very mindful of her legal responsibilities to even say you are that police have the resources that they need, as we do, and we are not giving them direction. But I would also point out in response to your question that we have seen a number of incidents and evidence of the effectiveness that law enforcement can have that they have the tools and authorities and laws that they need to effectively manage this type of situation. We've seen it evidenced in Toronto and in Quebec. And other jurisdictions across the country. Our responsibility here, working with our provincial and municipal partners to ensure that the police of jurisdiction, the Ottawa police service, has the resources and support that they need to do their job. And that is what we're committed to doing, and at the same time, you know, that that should always be done in a very thoughtful way so as not to be -- create a situation that there would be a perception that any order of government is giving direction to the police and simply supporting them and doing their job and making sure that they have the tools and resources that they need. I'd point out, by the way, that I will tell you. I'm speaking to my counterpart, the minister -- the solicitor general in Ontario. From the very outset of this, they have been ensuring that police services across Ontario, the O.P.P., have been providing support and tabs and will continue to do so. But we also have respect for the authorities and responsibilities of the police to maintain peace in their communities, maintain public order and uphold the rule of law.

Reporter: [Speaking French] Question. The former governor of the bank of Canada, mark carney, has said sedition in a letter that was printed in the "Globe and mail". Would you agree with that epithet for this protest?

Minister Mendicino: [Speaking French] I can start with an answer and then move on to my colleagues, including the minister LeBlanc. I would like to start by highlighting everyone's concern. You have to respect the law. You have to respect the rights of residents of Ottawa. There are some leaders of this convoy that have expressed some views that are so extreme, these statements are not consistent with Canadian values and that is why everyone has asked the convoy to leave. And get out of Ottawa. We need to make a distinction between peaceful protests but in the last few days there's not a lot of peace in Ottawa. So I'd like to give the floor to Dominic.

Minister Le Blanc: [Speaking French] When we hear things that might indicate criminal behavior, like were expressed by minister Mendicino and minister Blair R not a part of the government role. However T federal government understands the anger and frustration of residents of the Ottawa region. My elected colleagues in the region have expressed it clearly. As they said, the federals -- the federal government's role is to make sure that police authorities who have the primary and legal responsibility to settle this issue and to restore the rule of law in Ottawa have the resources necessary to make the decisions they need to make. And that is what we'll continue to do.

Question: We get the impression that your actions are come ago little -- too little too late. It's the 11th day of protests. Many people have reported crimes that have been committed. I feel like we would want to expect a stronger reaction from the federal government.

Minister Mendicino: As I said earlier, I think in the short-term future, we will have the opportunity to discuss. We will be able to draw lessons learned from the last week and a half. But right now we need to support the operations that are under way. We need to support our police services so that they may act independently of the federal government. This is one of the foundational principles of our democracy. There are good reasons to respect police jurisdiction. They have the responsibility to provide operational decisions in the field.

Moderator: David akin, global news?

Reporter: Thank you for taking our questions. Minister LeBlanc, some have suggested that this should be resolved by negotiations with somebody from the federal side and somebody from the gang out at the front there. What do you think of that idea?

Minister LeBlanc: David, I'll offer a few comment and my colleagues may want to pick up as well. We have, since the beginning of these unfortunate events, as you said, nine, 10 days ago, been in constant discussions with municipal and provincial partners as to what the federal government can appropriately do to support the law enforcement authorities, that have the jurisdiction and the decision-making role to ensure that public order is kept in the city of Ottawa. That's the primary responsibility for the government of Canada. We have certainly taken note, as my colleagues have said, of the understandable frustration that Canadians have with the ongoing pandemic circumstance. Our decisions have always been based on the best advices from doctors, from scientists, and what we think is in the best interest of ensuring the safety and public health of Canadians. So, those are the factors that our government considers when we make decisions, obviously with provincial public health authorities on the appropriate mix of measures. So, we'll continue to be guided by that advice. But also continue to support municipal and provincial partners who have the responsibilities in terms of the circumstances which are so completely unacceptable unfolding in Ottawa today. But maybe my colleagues want to add something to that.

Minister Mendicino: I'll just say --

Reporter: Ok, minister. I think that is final that somebody wants to say negotiation is a great idea. We have a limited amount of time. Anybody want to put their hand up and say negotiations are a great idea? I'll move on with my follow-up. Sorry to cut you off. We have a limited time. Minister LeBlanc, because you have the longest personal history with the prime minister, many say, wow, the national cap stall in a state of emergency. Wondering about the prime minister's comment on the fact that his national capital is in a state of emergence a city lives in personally and has lived here for some time. S a resident as well as the prime minister. Can you give us an indication of his involvement in this particular predicament? Is he evolved in meetings? What and where is the Prime minister?

Minister LeBlanc: So, again, the prime mister has been actively engaged every day in briefings and in updates from senior officials in the national security and intelligence community in terms of what's happening across the country, in Ottawa and across the country. I've had the opportunity to speak and work with him in meetings right through this past weekend. And the prime minister has been very, very much involved and continues to be involved in the operation of the government of Canada and the government of Canada has continued to function as it must in a very important public health context. And we have every reason to think that that important work will continue over the next number of days. Thank you.

Moderator: [Speaking French] Before we continue with the Canadian press -- a little bit more time for questions until 2:00 P.M. Thank you very much for that. Thank you for staying.

Reporter: [Speaking French] Earlier, you said that Ottawa police has resources to manage this situation. Even though you're giving additional resources through the RCMP. But for many days, the chief of Ottawa police has said that there is no police solution to this problem. So, how do these two ideas hold together?

Minister Mendicino: [Speaking French] Answer. I would like to mention that the RCMP added many more resources to support Ottawa police services. I would like the thank the RCMP for their contribution on the field. Their work has been exceptional. We have to continue to keep the communication open between the O.P.S. And the RCMP. I know that the RCMP commissioner is in constant communication with the Ottawa police chief. At the same time, we must recognize that once this protest will be over, we'll have to start a conversation. How can we be better prepared for such an event in the future? It's not acceptable to have a blockade and to have disruptions like these for Ottawa residents. There are many examples of the law being broken and this is a problem for everyone. But right now, for our government, the priority is to work together with our partners. We need to work with the provinces and the city of Ottawa. We have to support the excellent work of police services. And we have to get to the end of this convoy and now I'd like to give the floor to Dominic for more.

Minister LeBlanc: [Speaking French] I completely agree with what my colleague just said. The main role of the federal government in such a situation is to be there and support municipal and provincial partners. As my colleagues have explained so clearly. [...]

Interpreter: The interpreter would like to mention that the sound has cut out. We'll resume shortly.

Moderator: Your screen has frozen. Does anyone else want to jump in or do we move into a follow-up question?

Reporter: I will do my follow-up question. Mr. Leblanc was talking about cooperation between municipal and provincial levels of government. This trilateral table that was mentioned earlier. What does this change and why do you announce it today on the 11th day. What will it change?

Minister Blair: What we are doing is creating some formal structure around the important work that has to take place between all three orders of government in providing assistance and support to the city of Ottawa and respective police services, to the Ottawa police service so they can fulfill their responsibilities. It is very clear that the police services act in Ontario creates a responsibility for the police service of jurisdiction, in this case the Ottawa police service, to obtain public order and to provide for law enforcement. And we're working together collaboratively to make sure that all three orders of government are there for the city of Ottawa and most importantly for the residents of Ottawa to ensure that their police service has the resources and the support that they need to do their job.

Moderator: Thank you very much. We'll try to reconnect, Mr. Leblanc. Ok. We'll go with the next question. Kevin Gallagher, CTV news.

Reporter: Good afternoon. Could we be specific? What type of option is there for the government to assist?

Minister Mendicino: I think on a practical level, you've already seen that the RCMP have stepped up by adding 275 Mounties who have been deputized to enforce the law locally here in our communities and, again, I just want to commend them for their exemplary work. I know that the past number of days in Ottawa have been challenging for everyone. And especially those who live here. In addition to that, there are funds that they can apply for to help offset some of the additional expenditure which -- expenditures and costs that they have had to incur as a result of having to add those resources. The way the law works that where the Ottawa police service needs additional capacity and support, they first must turn to, and have turned to the O.P.P. And that is done in conjunction with my counterpart, Minister Jones, who I have had a number of constructive conversations on to the credit of the O.P.P., they, too, have been adding resources as have many police services across the province. I know that the mayor and my discussion with him has expressed a real concern for those businesses who have been negatively impacted as a result of having to remain shut and that has been caused by the blockades, the disruption, the very flagrant and troubling behavior that my colleagues articulated at the beginning of this press conference. It is going to be important that after we bring about the peaceful resolution of this convoy that we have a conversation about the ways in which we can be prepared for such an event. We need to respect the right to free speech. That is an important element of our democracy. But it can't come at the expense of public safety and there will be an important reflection from all of this as we move forward.

Minister Alghabra: I also would like to add. Our initials have been cooperating with provincial and municipal officials. For example, the ministry of transport has offered ideas to the Ontario ministry of transportation where they have powers within the highway traffic act to enforce violations of that act where commercial vehicles, registration can be suspended or insurance can be suspended and violators can be held accountable and face serious consequences to the violation of the law. Thanks.

Reporter: For my follow-up, I'd like to circle back to the foreign interference. What laws are there in Canada? I'm not sure I'm aware of any because it doesn't seem like there is any that would prevent a citizen from any country that donate to, you know, an online charity initiative like go fund me that is registered in California for a charity here. I'm trying to understand what is the legal process that the federal government may look at in terms of what is being called for an interference.

Minister Mendicino: We have strong laws in this country that are covered extensively in the criminal code that would legally prohibit anybody from contributing to an effort to undermine public safety or national security and there are numerous provisions that would apply. For example, if somebody were contributing with the intent of either causing public harm or trying to undermine public safety, that would be something that would be against the law and would be appropriate sanctions for that, if proven in a court of law. What you have in addition to an intelligence apparatus that looks closely for linkages test between the patterns and the sources of those contributions and what they may be used for. And if some of the sources of those funds are beyond our borders, then we would be looking at that very, very carefully. We do exceptional work every day, to be on alert for any foreign interference that might undermine our national security. And there are established conventions on how the intelligence side within the public safety community shares at the appropriate moment and time their information, their conventional law enforcement so where appropriate further action may be taken within the sphere of criminal justice. We have a federal policing branch within the RCMP that specializes in this area and that is why, wherever there is foul play of this sort, we will be in a position to act appropriately.

Minister Blair: I think it is useful to keep Canadians informed. When they understand the source of this funding, it helps them understand the source of this protest and I think it reveals some of, you know, the false nature of the claims being made and the positions being put forward. Casting a light on the source of funding that supports this illegal activity taking place in our country is useful for all Canadians to have a better understanding of what authorities are attempting to deal with.

Reporter: [Speaking French] There are many of you here today to announce a trilateral table. What do you tell to Ottawa residents that have been suffering through this for 11 days? Do you really think this is the solution that people are hoping for? Can you grant more resources to the police or announce that the emergency measures act will be invoked? Do you have any tangible solutions for these people who are waiting for answers?

Minister LeBlanc: I can give you a few comment and maybe Mona or other colleagues can add to it. As minister Blair has explained, these measures have been in place since the start of this crisis. The communication between the three orders of government, which are the municipal, provincial and federal levels. So, we're continuing to collaborate actively. And we have been doing so since the start of this event. All requests from the federal government have been granted. We are always ready to meet the needs of municipal authorities who have the legal responsibility in this circumstance. It is their job to restore order in the city of Ottawa. The federal government has an essential support role by providing additional resources to our partners. But like my colleagues have said, the time has come for the convoy to leave. They have harassed the residents of downtown Ottawa for 10 days already, the people who want to go to work or bring their children downtown can't do so and this must stop. The federal government remains ready to do what is necessary to support the authorities who have this responsibility. Mona, do you want add something?

Mona Fortier: [Speaking French] Thank you. I think you were very clear K. One thing, since day one, in discussion with mayor Watson, entrepreneurs, workers, we WER discussing how we can support them. Since the start of the pandemic, our government has supported businesses and workers and residents. We will continue to do this. We are currently exploring options to see how we can support them with business closures. So we'll come back with a solution but know that, since the start, these conversations have been happening and we've been exploring opportunities that are possible right now.

Reporter [Speaking French] At this rate, minister LeBlanc, do you think that we're still in it for many days and weeks? When will we decide to send in the army, for example, to get these protesters out?

Minister LeBlanc: [Speaking French] Maybe Marco can add to this, but the prime minister was very clear. This is the civilian police's responsibility. We are here to support municipal and provincial authorities and, like my colleagues have said, it's not up to politicians to give operational instructions to police forces. This is not how a mature and responsibly democracy works. We will support the legitimate authorities in taking their responsibility. This is the role of a responsible government. Marco, would you like to add something?

Minister Mendicino: [Speaking French] Very quickly I would like to say that I agree with you. The convoy needs to leave. The members of Ottawa are impatient now. And we can support law enforcement with resources. And we hope that this convoy will leave as soon as possible.

Moderator: Just a reminder to keep your questions and answers short and we will be able to squeeze in two other people.

Reporter: I wonder if you can react specifically by the comments of the Texas attorney general this weekend who said that the patriotic Texan donors are contributing to this trucker's convoy and their cause, their worthy cause. And do you consider that kind of thing foreign interference?

Minister Mendicino: Well, I'm happy to take that question and begin by saying that it is certainly not the concern of the Texas attorney general as to how we, in Canada, go about our daily lives in accordance with the rule of law. We have rules and laws and principles and those are all enshrined in the charter. There is an appropriate way to address that through law enforcement and what we have been talking about today, I think, is both a way of acknowledging that the great frustration of those who live in Ottawa. It's important how the government can support police services who are carrying out their work independently by giving them whatever additional resources that they need. And we've also talked about the need to be vigilant about potential foreign interference. You've seen in the past number of days that go fund me has taken some concrete actions to stop the flow of funds to the leaders who have been attributed to this convoy and as a result of flags that have come to their attention. And beyond that, whatever steps for the investigations that are ongoing and may be carried out by the police services will be done so in a fashion that is independent from the government. And so whatever statements may have been made by some foreign official are neither here nor there. We're Canadian. We have our own set of laws and we will follow them.

Reporter: Is anyone else commenting on that? I'm not sure. If not, I'll go ahead with my follow-up.

Minister Blair: Just quickly. We're all entitled to an opinion. In my opinion, he's wrong.

Reporter: Thank you. And, look, I think you've left us all here with, you know, your insistence that Ottawa has -- the Ottawa. Co-s have all the cops and authorities they need. But they specifically say they don't have the resources and they don't have the tools. They can't even get rid of, in some cases, some of the structures that have been set up because they have to consult with M.C.C. Or indigenous groups and they basically say their hands are tied. Oh, it's N our jurisdiction and it's not my job and clearly there are jurisdictional lines in normal times in. A crisis or emergency like this, how is it that nobody is seemingly taking the responsibility for leading the way?

Minister Mendicino: I do think, as you heard explained now very clearly, that where Ottawa police service needs additional capacity that they are being supported by the O.P.P. And other police services and including the RCMP. Together the cooperation that is being seen among all levels of law enforcement is resulting in concrete and tangible progress over the last day or so and we hope that that will continue. We talked about the need to maintain division and function and for good reason. We don't believe in democratizing law enforcement. There are some countries that do things that way and that would not be appropriate here in Canada. I do think that there will be an opportunity in the near future to have a conversation that you're talk about, to really be sure that we're capable of returning to this type of vent and prevent it from happening again. What's clear is that this kind of situation is not acceptable where you have a significant interruption that we've seen over the last couple of days that has negatively impacted Ottawa residences and to work together across law enforcement, across all governments, to come to a better solution so it never happens again. [Phone ringing]

Moderator: Merci. The last question. Short question, short answer, please.

Reporter: [Speaking French] My question is for minister Alghabra. In December, your government announced that all employees in federally regulated workplace would have to be vaccinated by regulation and that includes truckers that go from one provinces to another. So I was just wondering, is this still on or, given the circumstances that you want to put that on hold.

Minister Alghabra: Thank you for the question. We all believe that vaccines are our best way out of the pandemic. We actually ran a campaign on this just a few months ago. And Canadians overwhelmingly voted in support of parties and elected M.P.S who want to help us get out of the pandemic by following public health advice and scientists and doctors. Minister Regan announced that we are starting the consultation process for examining regulation to apply federally regulated sectors with a vaccine mandate. That work is ongoing. So, as we've done in the past, we will follow public health advice. We will consult the best advice as before us and these discussions are ongoing as we speak.

[Question missing from transcription]

Minister LeBlanc: I think my colleague explained clearly that some laws are in place in Canada and they prevent foreign interference and prevent inciting events that are illegal and don't respect current laws in Canada. We have intelligent services that are always at work and trying to identify security threats to Canada. These services are in place to provide advice to Marco Mendicino and other law enforcement groups when there is potential foreign interference. Here we're talking about interference that is inciting dit -- disorderly conduct in Canada and not respecting Canadian law. This is very different compared to supporting environmentalist work and supporting people who are breaking the law in Canada. There is a very important distinction here. There is an obligation to investigate these matters. This is in the hands of the appropriate authorities, whether it's the Canadian intelligence services or the relationship, but maybe my colleagues have another thing to add on this.

Minister Mendicino: Well said Dominic. Well said. We made a lot of progress

Moderator: So this will bring the press conference to a close. [End of Translation]

*Due to the nature of closed captioning, grammatical and editorial errors may be found within the attached transcript.
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